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TOWN OF CARRICKFERGUS.

Having taken occasion in several numbers of our first volume, to give some of the most interesting particulars of the early history of this ancient town, it may at present be sufficient to observe, that travellers *en route* to the Giant's Causeway, would do well to devote a little more time than is generally spent in this place, to an inspection of the Castle, and the remains of the walls and trenches by which the town is surrounded, as affording a tolerably fair specimen of the style of fortification from 1640 to 1746, in the northern portion of the island.

Carrickfergus is the assize town of the county. It was at a very early period considered rather an important situation, and was the scene of several sanguinary conflicts. We are informed by Mr. M'Skimmin in his History of Carrickfergus, that the walls, which were flanked with seven bastions, are still pretty entire, about six feet thick on the top towards the land, and about eighteen feet high, coarsely but strongly built in that manner called grouting; the corners of the bastions of cut yellowish freestone, different from any stone found in this neighbourhood. The land side was also strengthened by a wet ditch, now nearly filled up. There were four gates, anciently distinguished by the following names: Glenarm or Spittal gate, Woodburn or West gate, Water gate, and Quay gate. Spittal gate, now North gate, and West gate, now Irish gate, were formerly entered by drawbridges: the drawbridge and deep trench of the latter remained within memory, and part of the arch over the former is yet standing. Water gate and Quay gate were defended by battlements over them.

Adjoining, on the south of the town, is an ancient castle

belonging to the crown, occupied as a military garrison, and magazine to the northern district. It stands on a rock that projects into the sea, so that, at common tides, three sides of the building are enclosed by water. The greatest height of the rock is at its southern extremity, where it is about thirty feet, shelving considerably towards the land, the walls of the castle following exactly its different windings. Towards the town are two towers, called from their shape half moons, and between these is the only entrance, which is defended by a strait passage, with embrasures for fire-arms. About the centre of this passage was formerly a drawbridge; a part of the barbican that protected the bridge can still be seen. A dam west of the castle, is believed to have been originally made to supply the ditch at this entrance with water. Between the half-moons is a strong gate, above which is a machicolation, or aperture, for letting fall stones, melted lead, or the like, on the assailants. Inside this gate is a portcullis, and an aperture for the like purpose as that just mentioned; the arches on each side of this aperture are of the Gothic kind, and the only ones observed about the building. In the gun room of these towers are a few pieces of light ordnance. A window in the east tower, inside, is ornamented with round pillars; the columns are five feet high, including base and capital, and five inches and a half in diameter. The centre column seems to be a rude attempt at the Ionic; the flank columns have the leaves of the Corinthian; their bases consist of two toruses. Within the gates is the lower yard, or balium; on the right are the guard room and a barrack; the latter was built in 1802. Opposite these are large vaults, said to be

bomb proof, over which are a few neat apartments occupied by the officers of the garrison, ordnance storekeeper, and master gunner. A little southward are the armourer's forge and a furnace for heating shot; near which, on the outer wall of the castle, is a small projecting tower, called the lion's den.

Southward, on the right, is the passage into the inner yard or upper balium, by a gate with a semicircular arch, above which is a long aperture, circular at the top. Inside, this aperture opens considerably; and, on each side, are niches in the wall, apparently to protect those who defended the gate—northward of which are several like apertures, and on the south, a square tower, near which is a small door, or sally-port, with semicircular arch, and ornamented. The openings above this gate, and in the wall, appear to have been originally intended for the discharging of arrows; the top of the wall overhead seems to have been formerly garrisoned for a like purpose.

Within this yard, which is encompassed by a high wall, is a small magazine, built a few years since, several storehouses, and the keep, or donjon, a square tower ninety feet high. Both the south and east sides of this tower face the inner yard, its west wall forming a part of the outside wall of the building: its north wall faces the outer yard. The walls of the keep are eight feet ten inches thick; the entrance is on the east by a semicircular door in the second story. On the left of the entrance is a small door, now built up, by which was formerly a passage in the south-east corner, by helical stone stairs, to the ground floor and top of the tower. In this passage were loop-holes for the admission of air and light; and opposite each story a small door that opened into the different apartments. At present the ascent to the top is partly by wooden stairs inside. The ground story of the keep is bomb proof, with small slits looking into the inner yard. It is believed to have been anciently a state prison, and is now the principal magazine in this garrison. Several rooms in the other stories are occupied as an armoury, and for other military stores. On the top of the tower are two small houses; that on the south-east corner covers the mouth of the passage; the other, on the south-west corner, seems to have been intended for a sentinel.

The tower is divided into five stories; the largest room was formerly in the third story, with semicircular windows. It was called Fergus's dining-room, and was twenty-five feet ten inches high, forty feet long, and thirty-eight broad. Within the keep was formerly a draw well, thirty-seven feet deep, the water of which was anciently celebrated for medicinal purposes. This well is now nearly filled up with rubbish.

The following notice of this castle is given in a survey by George Clarkson in 1587: "The building of the said castle on the south part is three towers, viz. the gate-house, tower in the middle thereof, which is the entry at a draw-bridge over a dry moat; and in said tower is a prison and porter lodge, and over the same a fair lodging, called the constable's lodging; and in the court between the gate-house and west tower in the corner, being of divers squares called Cradyfergus, is a fair and comely building, a chapel, and divers houses of office, on the ground, and above the great chamber, and the lords lodging, all which is now in great decay as well in the coverture being lead, also in timber and glass, and without help and reparation it will soon come to utter ruin."

THE LITTLE NURSE.

A SKETCH FROM THE WICKLOW HILLS.

* * * * *
 Shall we not seize the time and ride
 By Avon's stream, by Lara's side,
 To yon lone vale where, hid from day,
 The miner works his venturous way,
 Wrestling from earth her glittering hoard,
 Beneath primeval ruin stored;
 Heap piled on heap, as wave on wave,
 Of worlds succeeding worlds the grave.

Such were the concluding lines of an invitation once sent me, to join a few scientific friends on a tour through

the Wicklow hills. An amateur in geology was the Laureate of the party. The events of this little excursion are among the pleasantest recollections of my life; but in the following sketch of our first day's progress, I have omitted much, especially in details of scenery, rendered familiar by the pens of more professed tourists; and indeed my chief inducement to arrange these notes for perusal is, that they include an affecting and somewhat novel incident in the history of domestic life.

The first object of our excursion was the great lead mine of Luggenure, opening, as our geologist informed us on the side of a lofty hill, and driven downwards to a great depth through the solid rock. To reach this point we started with the earliest dawn, and ere sunrise were upon a road which, winding at the base of Sugarloaf mountain, leads by a very gradual ascent to the plain of Calory, on its south-western side. Here our botanist, Mr. Neville, who has preserved beyond the close of his half century, all the freshness of spirit and much of the activity of youth, insisted on climbing the mountain in quest of some of the rarer species of Fern which he expected to find among the rocks near the summit. The geologist, hammer in hand, backed this proposal: our painter anticipated a glorious view from the peak; and Dr. James and myself, having no hobbies of our own, were content to enjoy it with him.

Accordingly, where the road wound through the valley of Glencormac, we quitted our vehicle, and, sending it forward to meet us at the opposite side, began to climb the shoulder of the hill, although the loose rocks upon its steep and shattered side, seen through the grey twilight, appeared doubly grotesque in form and threatening in position. Before we had reached the top, the east began to redden, and a light breeze arose: the clouds broke up suddenly, like the ice in a northern spring, and the blue sky, bright and distant, became visible through the openings. A wreath of white mist still rested on the low range of hills stretching to our right, from the waterfall and wooded heights of Powerscourt to the eastern boundary of Lake Dan, concealing their outline, and waving like a curtain along their sides: the monarch Djouce alone heaved his broad summit into the clear blue sky, and, cut off by the mist from the adjoining hills and the plain below him, seemed a portion of some brighter world. One by one the cabins scattered over the lower grounds began to send up their thin columns of smoke, and figures could be seen moving through the fields as we descended slowly towards a dark speck on the road below, which we hailed as our vehicle. Mr. Neville had found his fern, but the geologist had been less successful as to certain sandstones, and the mist had interfered with our draughtsman's view. Not the less cheerily did we resume our way. We had started as philosophers, and were determined to support that character in all its senses.

The sun was up, and the world awake and stirring, as we passed the bridge over the Avonmore, and entered the romantic valley of the Seven Churches. The bare and rocky glen of Luggenure now lay open to our right; but instead of proceeding at once to the mine, we advanced into Glendalough, and again crossing the river nearer to where it issues from the lake, wandered for some time among those ancient ecclesiastical buildings now in ruin, the number of which within so small a space, renders it probable, independent of local tradition, that here was one of those seats of learning and religion which gave celebrity to this island in the earlier ages of Christianity. We then rowed across the lake to gain a nearer view of the rock from which St. Kevin saw the waters close over his Kathleen, and also of the cave or "bed," which he is said to have made his home. Our painter was so delighted with the land view from the lake, that on our return he spread forth his drawing materials upon a rock, and commenced a sketch. As I stood beside him watching the progress of his work, I could not but reflect how nearly to a state of nature this once thronged and cultivated valley had returned; and, except in the vague traditions of the place, how entirely the memory of those who once taught and worshipped here had perished. The ruined walls remain, and traces of ancient husbandry can still be discerned on the steep sides of the surround-